

# Sparking Literacy



TOPLINE NEWS FROM READ TO ME PROJECT SEPTEMBER 2023

Students say...

*My little brother repeats the words I say when I'm reading to him. He's 4 years old. And he points to the pictures to ask 'What's that? What's that?'.  
- 5th grader in Salinas*

*Its [Read to Me Project] important because it helps there little brain grow and grow into a big smart intelligent brain. - 5th grader, Valente reads to a 4 year old at home in Greenfield*

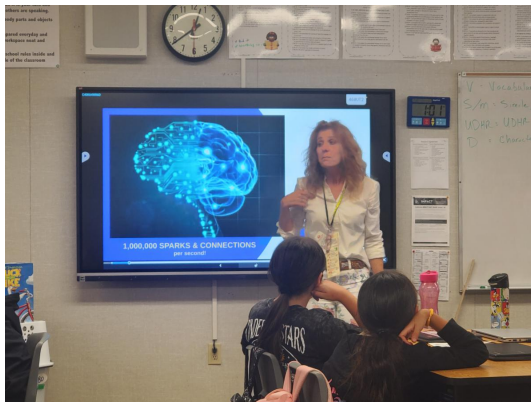
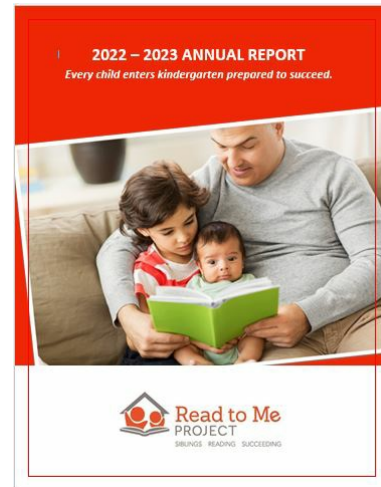
*I like Read to Me Project because even at 7 months I know my little sister likes it when I read to her because she laughs and smiles and tries to hold books.  
- 4th grade boy in Greenfield*

## Exceptional Impacts, News, and Achievements

If you haven't already heard, Read to Me Project's 2022 - 2023 Annual Report is now available on our website at [Annual Report](#).

A few points of interest:

- 42% of Read to Me Project students were the only ones reading to the little ones at home in 2022 - 2023. Taking into consideration households with multiple children under the age of five, 390 children between 6 months and 5 years old would miss out on crucial reading opportunities during their formative brain development years if their older siblings were not enrolled in RtMP.
- Teachers said that the program inspired reading engagement and confidence and gave their students a sense of responsibility at home with the little ones.
- New data showed measured beneficial impacts on the little ones being read to by their older brother or sister.



**1 million sparks and connections per second!** RtMP program coordinators explain

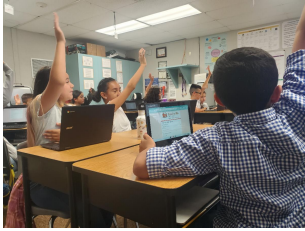
**Ready, Set ,GO!**

## Lucky 13th Year

The Read to Me Project was founded in 2011 as a grass roots, prevention-based solution to low literacy. Since then, it has helped to close the literacy gap for more than 25,500 children.

In preparation for the 13th program year, bins of specially curated, age appropriate books have been placed in the current, to date, count of 71

what makes the brain spark. It's an "aha" moment for students that inspires them to want to make their own brains spark by learning more.



*When asked who would like to serve as a RtMP book bin manager for the class,*

*there is no shortage of volunteers for the leadership responsibility.*



*Student book bin managers are trained and supported by their RtMP program coordinator.*

classrooms for students to read to babies, toddlers, and 3-, 4-, and 5- year olds at home. Teachers are appointing two or three students in their class to serve as Read to Me Project Book Bin Managers to be responsible for the weekly book check outs and recording the number of days each classmate read at home over the prior week.

The first coaching sessions with classes of more than 2,100 4th, 5th, and 6th graders are underway. They are learning how babies learn and that the brain is sparked by new information.

Students are also learning the "9 Best Ways to Read to Young Children." Students who are new or returning to the program will be reading to approximately 1,200 little brothers, sisters, cousins or friends in the household. Those without a little one to read to will be reading to a grandma, an aunt, any relative or friend in the home, their pet, or even a stuffed animal. Every student in a participating class benefits by the reading practices that improve fluency and comprehension.

## **Opening (new) Doors**

### **Message from the Executive Director**

As the 2023-24 school year kicks off and the sound of children's laughter fills the school grounds once again, the Read to Me Project crew is eagerly returning to 4th, 5th, and 6th grade classrooms in Monterey and Tehama Counties. The program coordinators have an exciting mission: to guide students in mastering RtMP's "9 Best Ways to Read to Young Children." But that's not all – we will also forge closer connections with parents through the Abriendo Puertas program, which translates to "Opening Doors."

As a child's first teacher, parents play an important role in their children's academic success. Opening Doors' evidence-based approach equips families with the essential tools needed to shape a brighter future for their young learners, whether they're toddlers or school-aged.



Over the course of ten sessions, parents will delve into topics such as literacy, early childhood development, good health, and social and emotional well-being, all delivered in a culturally relevant manner. This knowledge empowers parents to better support their children both on and off the school campus.

Many of our 4th, 5th and 6th graders exceed their parents' reading levels, yet parents grasp the significance of their older children reading to a younger child and actively support the effort at home.

As we embark on the journey to unite informed and supportive parents throughout the upcoming year, our team is also committed to elevating our school-based program to an evidence-based status. While we have amassed years of reading assessment data that attests to the program's efficacy, we are determined to take it to the next level. Stay tuned for more updates on these exciting developments and if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at [julia@readtomeproject.org](mailto:julia@readtomeproject.org).

I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Julia

## **Read to Me Project Selected for**

**MONTEREY COUNTY GiVES!**

Joining Together for Big Ideas

**Our only fundraiser of the year!**

Challenge Grants will seed fundraising efforts. A special Challenge Grant form is required with a minimum donation of \$500 payable to the Community Foundation for Monterey County (noting MC Gives/Read to Me Project.) Challenge Grant Deadline, October 18th, 5 pm. Please contact RtMP in advance for details: [mary@readtomeproject.org](mailto:mary@readtomeproject.org)

**The campaign will begin November 9th and end December 31st.  
Donations will receive a percentage match from  
Monterey County Gives! Campaign Partners**

Monterey County Weekly

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Monterey Peninsula Foundation, Host of the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro Am

Gunde & Ernie Posey Family Foundation

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**Donate Now**

**MC Gives!  
donation page  
goes live  
Nov. 9th**

***Every child entering kindergarten prepared to succeed.***

